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## OUR ART CLUBS.

## IV.—THE TILE CLUB.



C. S. REINHART.

IT is nearly ten years since the Tile Club came into existence out of an informal gathering of friends in a Union Square studio. It dates its origin from early in the autumn of 1877, and its last public appearance was made in the handsome Christmas publication its members put out through the Harpers in 1884. Its organization has been kept up in a desultory way, however, and now and then it meets and gives a dinner to somebody. Its newest banquet is that which it is to extend to Mr. James McNeil Whistler as a send-off for his American lecture tour this winter. The Tile Club

dinners are not pretentious, but they are good, and they are seasoned by that sauce of joviality and good fellowship which does more than the cook towards the enjoyment of a feast.

There were no pretensions about the principles on which the Tile Club was organized. It held its meetings on Wednesday evenings in the studios of the members, one after another. The host of the evening provided a modest refectory and received in return the fruits of the evening's work. It was a club without officers and with a membership limited to twelve. There were no initiation fees or dues. The expense to each member was the entertainment for the night he served as host and the tiles the night's work was done on. How successful the new idea was, may be inferred from the fact that the first meeting of the club was attended by two persons. Each religiously painted his tile, however, and then gravely and solemnly destroyed it, so that the minutes of that initial meeting may be looked upon as lost.

The idea was too good a one to perish, however. The two first Tilers called another meeting, at which their number was doubled. Thereafter the membership grew until the list was filled. A musical variation was added to the entertainment of the evening, and several musical members admitted on an honorary basis. The commemoration of its labors and wanderings in *Scribner's Monthly* in 1879 brought it prominently before the public and for a time the Tile Club was one of the sensations of the town. The original members were Walter Paris, now in Washington and in whose studio the first meeting was held, and E. Wimbridge, a curious genius who has been spending his later years in India as a member of the Theosophical Society and a devout acolyte of Mme. Blavatsky. These two may be regarded as the founders of the club, though neither an active member of it now. Edwin A. Abbey and C. S. Reinhart were the next members. Both are now settled abroad, though the club feasted Mr. Reinhart this summer during his flying trip to America. Other members who came in at the succeeding

meetings were W. R. O'Donovan, the sculptor; F. Hopkinson Smith; W. M. Laffan, amateur and critic; Arthur Quartley, R. Swain Gifford, Winslow Homer, J. Alden Weir and William M. Chase. The personnel of the club has undergone such changes as are inseparable from club organizations. Old members have dropped out and new ones come in. The very informality of its management and the elasticity of its rules renders these variations of membership natural to it. Among well known names which have since its origin been associated with it are those of Frederick Dielman, N. Sarony, Elihu Vedder, Frank D. Millet; Charles Parsons, the amiable and able English water colorist and illustrator; Earl Shinn, a talented Philadelphian, better known to the literature of art, to which he has made some valuable contributions, as Edward Strahan; C. G. Bush, the most expert master with the pen in America; Augustus St. Gaudens, the sculptor; the architect, Stanford White, George H. Boughton and George W. Maynard.

It probably needs no remark from us that a club with such a membership roll to point to, has no occasion to be ashamed of its existence. If it were not that their professional interest lead the members in diverse paths, there is no doubt that the club would be established on a broad and permanent basis among the social organizations of New York. Purely social in its primary idea, the Tile Club has proved of no little benefit to its members in closing that link between the artist and the public so necessary to the one and so valuable to the other. Its cohesion is maintained to-day, in its quaint little club house in West Tenth Street, by the spirit of good fellowship and of progressive and ambitious labor which has bound it together all along. In the happier day which is to come for American art, it will stand ready to assume its place, duly incorporated, as the chief art club of America. As an exhibition club it is not



F. D. MILLET.

likely to compete with the associations already in existence. Its mission is a social one, and if it fulfills it, it will confer a benefit upon the art world which can now only be estimated in theory.

### INTERIOR DECORATION, GOOD AND BAD.

THE other day I called on a friend who lives in a fine house. His establishment is, however, restricted in space, as many of the finest houses in our American cities are. The parlor in which I sat was narrow and deep, and to render it more gloomy was decorated and furnished in the deepest and richest colors. The sense of oppression was so great that I actually opened the window and put my head out to catch a breath of fresh air.

The error of my friend in decorating his parlor is an altogether too common one with us. We decorate irrespective of circumstances. We pile up a wealth of splendor where it does not belong and are satisfied with the result for the sake of what it cost us. What we want applied in decoration is consistency and



J. ALDEN WEIR.